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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The seven titles deal with the following topics: (1) the prediction of reading comprehension from critical thinking skills, cognitive thinking skills, and meaning vocabulary with college freshmen; (2) the effects of instruction in comprehension strategies on reading skills of academically underprepared community college students; (3) reading rate and comprehension for readers untrained and trained in rapid reading; (4) reading improvement programs in Wisconsin business and industry; (5) the relationships between reading and personality and WAIS scales at an open door community college; (6) the relationship of cognitive development, cognitive style, and reading ability with academic success of community college students enrolled in a human anatomy and physiology course; and (7) the effects of transformational sentence combining on the reading comprehension of college students. (FL)

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# Reading and Study Skills and Instruction: College and Adult:

Abstracts of Doctoral Dissertations Published in Dissertation Abstracts International, July through December 1985 (Vol. 46 Nos. 1 through 6).

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This bibliography has been compiled as part of a continuing series designed to make information on relevant dissertations available to users of the ERIC system. Monthly issues of Dissertation Abstracts International are reviewed in order to compile abstracts of dissertations on related topics, which thus become accessible in searches of the ERIC data base. Ordering information for dissertations themselves is included at the end of the bibliography.

Abstracts of the following dissertations are included in this collection:

Farley, Mary Jane
THE PREDICTION OF READING COMPREHENSION FROM CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS, COGNITIVE THINKING SKILLS, AND MEANING VOCABULARY WITH FRESHMEN COLLEGE STUDENTS

Gibbs, Shirlee Mae
THE EFFECTS OF INSTRUCTION IN COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES ON READING SKILLS OF ACADEMICALLY UNDERPREPARED COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Hansen, Jack Randy
READING RATE AND COMPREHENSION FOR READERS UNTRAINED-VS.-TRAINED IN RAPID-READING

Lueschow, Thomas John
READING-IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS IN WISCONSIN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY: CURRENT PROGRAMS AND FUTURE TRENDS, AS VIEWED BY SELECTED TRAINING DIRECTORS

Menary, Earl LeRoy, Jr.
A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN READING AND PERSONALITY AND WAIS SCALES AT AN OPEN DOOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Richards, Fred, III
THE RELATIONSHIP OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT, COGNITIVE STYLE, AND READING ABILITY WITH ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF STUDENTS IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLED IN A HUMAN ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY COURSE

Story, Barbara Ann
THE EFFECTS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL SENTENCE-COMBINING ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

THE PREDICTION OF READING COMPREHENSION FROM CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS, COGNITIVE THINKING SKILLS, AND MEANING VOCABULARY WITH FRESHMEN COLLEGE STUDENTS Order No. DA8510017

FARLEY, MARY JANE, PH.D. *Southern Illinois University at Carbondale*, 1984. 182pp. Major Professor: Margaret Keyser Hill

The first purpose of this study was to examine the degree of relationship among the reading, reasoning, and vocabulary variables in this study. The second purpose of this study was to examine the prediction of the reading comprehension ability of underachieving college freshmen from their: (1) critical thinking skills; (2) cognitive thinking skills; (3) meaning vocabulary.

One hundred and sixty-five second semester underachieving freshmen at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale who scored below the fiftieth percentile either on the *Iowa Silent Reading Test* (1973) or the *Nelson Denny Reading Test* (1976) were advised to enroll in a reading course, C.I.M. 212, Systematic Analysis of Texts. These students were given three tests in the following sequence: (1) *Cornell Critical Thinking Test*, Level Z (1982); (2) *Developing Cognitive Abilities Test* (1981); (3) *Iowa Silent Reading Test*, Level 3 (1973). Then the raw scores that were derived from these tests were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The study was designed as a correlational predictive study.

The pattern of correlations discovered in this study did not always follow traditional reading theory. For instance, literal comprehension, i.e., reading explicit material, had a closer relationship with higher-level verbal reasoning than it did to low-level verbal reasoning. Then critical thinking skills were not related to critical reading comprehension skills. Next, semantics was not found to be related to the following variables: higher-level verbal questions, to the complete verbal DCAT, and to vocabulary. Finally, cognitive thinking skills (DCAT) and vocabulary were found to be significant ($P = .0001$) predictors of reading comprehension.

THE EFFECTS OF INSTRUCTION IN COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES ON READING SKILLS OF ACADEMICALLY UNDERPREPARED COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS Order No. DA8517611

GIBBS, SHIRLEE MAE, ED.D. *Northern Arizona University*, 1985. 171pp.

A specific instruction model, the Generic Comprehension Instructional Strategy, was the focus of the current study. The Strategy is a directed and systematic teaching approach that provides opportunities for students in independent application of reading comprehension instruction. The study examined the impact of the Strategy on the reading skills of an academically-deficient community college population.

One hundred thirty-one students enrolled in a developmental reading course participated in the study. Two groups of students received the Strategy lessons while four groups received regular instruction which did not include Strategy elements. The students were tested at three junctures throughout the duration of the study. Between the second and third testing junctures the Strategy lessons were withdrawn.

Students who received the Strategy lessons showed significant gains in reading comprehension skills. Following the withdrawal of the Strategy lessons, however, students did not maintain their gains in comprehension. Effects of the Strategy and regular instruction were similar for vocabulary, reading rate, and total reading acheivement.

Students who received the Strategy lessons outperformed their counterparts in comprehension. Further, students indicated a positive attitude towards the Strategy lessons. Withdrawal of the Strategy lessons and a return to regular instruction had an impact on the treatment group. Although the Strategy had short-term effectiveness more extended effects may have been impeded by unsuccessful generalization skills within the population.

Differential attrition rates were noted between the students who received the Strategy lessons and the students who received regular instruction. This difference in attrition in favor of the Strategy group suggests a positive outcome beyond achievement effects. It is possible that the Strategy engaged students to the extent that it contributed to the differential dropout rate. Results of this study indicate that further investigation into the Generic Comprehension Instructional Strategy is warranted.

READING RATE AND COMPREHENSION FOR READERS UNTRAINED-VS.-TRAINED IN RAPID-READING Order No. DA8505977

HANSEN, JACK RANDY, PH.D. *Columbia University*, 1984. 159pp.

The controversy over rapid reading has continued since the early 1900's and has centered around understanding the nature of rapid reading. Issues include: (1) To what extent can reading with comprehension occur at rates in excess of normative and posited physiological limits? (2) To what extent does the rapid reader's comprehension depend on concept repetition, skimming material, and ease of material? (3) Are non-saccadic eye-movements (e.g., pursuit eye-movements) utilized by rapid readers? The present study addresses the last two points and proides insight into the first point.

A difficult reading selection on an unfamiliar topic was rewritten into two conditions: no-repetition and high-repetition conditions of 11 pages each but testing was based only upon page 10 (without the reader's foreknowledge). In the former condition each of six concepts appeared once and in the latter conditon each appeared three times.

Three tests were designed: (1) a free recall, (2) a cued recall and (3) a word recognition test of having seen specific words during reading. Testing without reading established the absence of prior knowledge permitting successful guessing.

Forty-two trained and thirty-weven untrained students from Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics were tested. They were instructed to read the article as fast as possible for good comprehension.

The results indicate concept repetition doesn't affect reading rate or comprehension for the trained or untrained subjects. Comprehension results showed no significant differences between the trained and untrained. However, reading rate means were significantly different--the means were 194 W.P.M. (s.d. = 47) for the untrained and 514 W.P.M. (s.d. = 247) for the trained. Four students read faster than the commonly accepted physiological limit of 800 W.P.M. with one at 1425 W.P.M. Comprehension scores for these four were generally at or above the mean of either group. Test results indicate that words distributed over the page are recognized as having been seen as readily by trained readers as by the untrained.

Eye-movement photography of four highly trained rapid readers shows a sequence of saccadic movements followed by long sweeps to a (usually) lower portion of the text with indication that information is obtained during both movements.

READING-IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS IN WISCONSIN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY: CURRENT PROGRAMS AND FUTURE TRENDS, AS VIEWED BY SELECTED TRAINING DIRECTORS Order No. DA8424525

LUESCHOW, THOMAS JOHN, PH.D. *The University of Wisconsin - Madison*, 1984. 102pp. Supervisor: Professor Kenneth L. Dulin

This study attempts to determine what types of reading improvement programs have been or may be offered to professionally-oriented readers. A survey was conducted which asked 300 selected training directors a series of questions relative to the reading concerns of professionally-oriented readers. These questions sought to: (1) Determine the existence of any concerns as well as



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their nature; (2) Determine what types of reading improvement programs had been offered in the past, as well as how they were evaluated; and (3) Determine what types of future reading improvement programs may be offered in the future.

The collected data are displayed and discussed using six research questions as focal points.

The conclusions reached are largely consistent with the Review of Literature. There are four conclusions drawn from the collected data.

Professionally-oriented readers do indeed have concerns regarding their occupational reading, according to these training directors. This concern is most apparent in the randomly expressed comments of professionally-oriented readers. The concern most often heard suggests that these readers are expected to process a growing volume of information in short periods of time.

Past programs have most often taken three forms; self-contained kits, local school reading courses, and commercial speed reading courses. Reviews have been mixed. Supporters and detractors have both provided a spectrum of opinion.

Future programs may most often be headed by reading consultants. There was more than a ten-fold increase in the number of reading consultants which respondents chose for future programs.

One somewhat surprising conclusion reached by this study was the similarity of much of the data; that is, a lack of diversity between industries was present. It was suggested by some researchers that reading concerns were most acute in several areas of business and industry. This study does not support that finding. Rather, concern among professionally-oriented readers seems to be widespread.

It should also be remembered that these people are often excellent readers and they are probably in the best position to assess their own needs.

## A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN READING AND PERSONALITY AND WAIS SCALES AT AN OPEN DOOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Order No. DA8513921

MENARY, EARL LEROY, JR., PH.D. *Michigan State University*, 1984. 118pp.

The purpose of this study was to obtain and analyze data concerning the relationship between reading and personality and intelligence scores of a group of open door community college students. The writer also explored the development of a personality and achievement profile that might help clinicians understand the strengths and weaknesses of the students with whom they work. Data were obtained on 127 open door community college students residing in the college district; they were Caucasian and predominantly middle class. The Nelson Denny Reading Test (Form C) was used to obtain students' total reading scores. The Clinical Analysis Questionnaire and the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale were used to measure personality and intelligence, respectively.

The subjects were arranged into comparison groups based on their total reading achievement on the Nelson-Denny. Those obtaining scores one-quarter standard deviation above the mean (approximately the top 40%) were designated the better-reading students; those scoring one-quarter standard deviation below the mean designated the poorer-reading students. Correlations between total reading achievement and performance on the CAQ and between total reading achievement and WAIS subscale scores were obtained using a product-moment correlation procedure. Two-way analyses of variance were used in comparing better-reading and poorer-reading students. Results were as follows: Statistically significant relationships existed between reading and personality for the total group; the relationships were enhanced by intrasexual comparisons. Statistically significant relationships between male total reading achievement and personality characteristics indicated that better-reading males were more intelligent, more imaginative, more liberal and experimental in their thinking, decisive, and resourceful. They had good vocabularies and reasoning abilities. Statistically significant relationships between female total reading achievement and personality characteristics indicated that better-reading females were more intelligent, assertive and headstrong, quick and alert, secure and self-confident, liberal and experimental in their thinking, decisive and resourceful, restless and excitement seeking, had complacent attitudes toward anti-social behavior, were not hurt by criticism, and lacked self-insight. Comparison of better and poorer readers' scores on the WAIS scales indicated that a profile analysis did not yield useful information. The only information evident was a verbal deficiency, which is assessed more easily by means other than a WAIS test.

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT, COGNITIVE STYLE, AND READING ABILITY WITH ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF STUDENTS IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLED IN A HUMAN ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY COURSE

Order No. DA8508335

RICHARDS, FRED, III, PH.D. *The University of Texas at Austin*, 1984. 172pp. Supervisor: James P. Barufaldi

The purpose of this study was to analyze cognitive developmental level, cognitive style field dependence/independence, and reading ability variables for their use as predictors of academic success of community college students enrolled in a human anatomy and physiology course. The population for this study consisted of 131 students who were majoring in health-career fields at a Southwestern urban community college. All subjects were enrolled in the Fall Semester of 1983 in the day classes of a human anatomy and physiology course.

The videotape version of the Classroom Test of Formal Operations was used to evaluate cognitive development. Cognitive style field dependence/independence was measured by the score on the Group Embedded Figures Test. Reading ability was assessed by the Comparative Guidance and Placement (CGP) Reading Placement Test. Academic success was determined by subject performance on teacher-made examinations administered to students taking human anatomy and physiology.

Data analysis was accomplished by correlating the score of each of the three research instruments with the measure of academic success. Regression analysis was used to examine the combined effect of the three independent variables with the measure of academic success. Findings of the investigation reveal a statistically significant relationship between cognitive developmental level and academic success ($r = .38$, $p < .001$), a statistically significant relationship between cognitive style field dependence/independence and academic success ($r = .28$, $p = .001$), and a statistically significant relationship between reading ability and academic success ($r = .41$, $p < .001$). Cognitive developmental level, cognitive style field dependence/independence, and reading ability combined are significantly related to academic success ($F = 10.77$, $p < .001$). The majority of subjects in this sample population was field dependent, concrete, and read at the fifty percentile or less level.

This study provided evidence for a statistically significant relationship between cognitive developmental level and academic success, between cognitive style field dependence/independence and academic success, between reading ability and academic success, and between the combination of all three of these independent variables and academic success in human anatomy and physiology.



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THE EFFECTS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL SENTENCE-COMBINING ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS Order No. DA8509065

STORY, BARBARA ANN, ED.D. *Auburn University*, 1985. 193pp.
Director: Richard E. Brogdon

The purpose of this study was to determine if the use of sentence-combining techniques increased reading comprehension for college students. Sentence-combining is the act of combining several short sentences that have been derived by transformational analysis from longer ones.

Subjects were 71 students who were taking RED 100, Effective Reading, Language, and Study Skills (a reading improvement course designed for college students), at a southeastern university, Winter, 1984, and Spring, 1984, quarters. Subjects were randomly assigned to two groups. The experimental group consisted of 36 subjects and the control group consisted of 35 subjects.

The experimental design employed in the investigation was the equivalent control-group design. The data were compiled and analyzed using the SPSS-X computer program on pretest and posttest scores (Stanford TASK, Level 2) through computer services, at the University of South Alabama. Analysis of Covariance was used to test for significant differences between the experimental and control groups' reading comprehension levels. Analysis of Covariance was then used to test for differences in the subparts of reading comprehension. Results of the analysis indicated that no significant difference existed between the groups.



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